This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the Application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1.   (currently amended) A method of managing a first points issuer and a second points issuer, wherein first points are issued by a first points issuer and differ from the second points that are issued by the second points issuer, said managing method is implemented by a computer programmed to effect the following steps of:

(a)   a customer setting a first number of the first points to be ~~redeemed~~ <u>sold</u>;

(b)   the first points issuer setting the point withdrawal rate of the first points and the second points issuer setting the deposit rate of the second points, each of said withdrawal rate and of said deposit rate being indicative of the monetary value of each of the first points and each of the second points respectively;

(c)   determining a second number of the second points based upon the point withdrawal rate of the first points issuer, the deposit rate of the second points issuer and the first number of the first points; and

(d)   <u>exchanging the first number of the first points from the first point issuer to the second points issuer</u> ~~transmitting the second equivalent number of second points to the second points issuer~~.

2.   (previously presented) The method of managing as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step c) of determining the equivalent number of the second points comprises the sub-steps of:

(i) determining the monetary value of the first number of first points as the product of the first number of first points and the point withdrawal rate of the first points issuer; and

(ii) determining the equivalent number of the second points as the quotient of the monetary value of the first number of first points divided by the point depositing rate of the second points issuer.

3. (previously presented) A system for managing first and second points issuers, first points are issued by the first points issuer and differ from second points that are issued by the second points issuer, said managing system comprising:

(a) a first terminal having a first terminal database for storing an account of the customer's first points;

(b) a second terminal having a second terminal database for storing an account of the customer's second points; and

(c) a transaction center having a center input and a central computer programmed to effect the following steps:

(i) the customer setting via said center input a first number of first points to be sold;

(ii) the first points issuer setting a point withdrawal rate of the first points and the second point issuer setting a point deposit rate of the second points, each of said withdrawal rate and said deposit rate being indicative of the monetary value of each of their first points and the monetary value of each of their second points respectively;

3

(iii)   determining an equivalent number of the second points based upon the point withdrawal rate of the first points issuer, the point deposit rate of the second points issuer and the first number of the first points; and

(iv)   providing respectively to said first and second points issuers a first transaction message to withdraw the first number of first points from said first terminal database and to deposit the equivalent number of second points in said second terminal database.

4.   (previously presented) The program managing system as claimed in claim 3, wherein said transaction center further responds to the first transaction message to convert the first number of first points into an equivalent second number of second points and to deposit the second number of second points in said second terminal database of said second terminal.

5.   (withdrawn) A method of permissioning a customer to enroll in a selected one or more of a plurality of point programs, each point program being controlled by its point issuer, said permissioning method is implemented by a computer programmed to effect the following steps of:

(a)   facilitating the customer to select at least one point program of the plurality in which to be enrolled, and to enter predetermined information about the customer;

(b)   permitting at least one point issuer to set its own criteria for customer enrollment; and

(c)   comparing the customer's information with the enrollment criteria and, if there is a match, permissioning the customer to enroll in the selected one point program.

4

6.   (withdrawn) A method of facilitating a customer to enroll in selected ones of a plurality of point programs and to keep track of the number of points held by the customer in each point program with which the customer is enrolled, said enrolling and tracking method is implemented by a computer programmed to effect the following steps of:

(a)   maintaining a customer's file with a list of the IDs of the point programs in which the customer has enrolled;

(b)   facilitating the customer to enroll in a new point program; and

(c)   upon enrolling in a new point program:

(i)   adding the ID of the new point program to the customer's file;

(ii)   creating a new point program file for the customers to retain its balance of points in the new point program; and

(iii)   adding from the point program file to the customer's file the point balance of the new point program.

7.   (withdrawn) The enrolling and tracking method of claim 6, wherein there is further included the steps of detecting a change of the customer's point balance in the point program file, and upon a point balance change, updating the point balance maintained in the customer's file with the changed point balance of the point program file.

8.   (withdrawn) A system for enabling a customer to enroll in selected ones of a plurality of point programs and keep track of the points issued to the customer by each of a plurality of the loyalty programs in which the customer has enrolled, said system comprising:

(a)   a plurality of terminals, each being related to a corresponding one of the plurality of point programs, being connected by a data transmission path to a transaction center and comprising a terminal server and a terminal database, each terminal database

5

has a file for each of the plurality of present customers of the terminals' point program for storing corresponding point balances, and each terminal server is programmed to respond to a new customer file message to create a new points file for a new customer in said terminal database; and

(b) said transaction center including a center input, a center database and a transaction server programmed to:

(i) maintain in said center database a customer's file with a list of the Ids of the point programs in which the customer has enrolled;

(ii) facilitate a customer to enroll in a new point loyalty program; and

(iii) upon enrolling in the new point program, adding the ID of the new point program to the customer's file in said center database, adding to the customer's file in said center database the point balance of the new point program, and generating and transmitting the create a new customer file message to said terminal associated with the points program in which the customer has enrolled.

9. (withdrawn) The points tracking system as claimed in claim 8, wherein there is further included a device communicating with each of said plurality of terminal databases and said center database for sampling the point balances for the customer stored in said terminal database of a selected number loyalty programs and updating with the sampled balance the customer's point balances of the selected loyalty programs stored in said center database file.

10. (withdrawn) In a system for enabling a customer to enroll and keep track of its points issued by selected ones of a plurality of point programs in which the customer has enrolled, each point program being managed by a corresponding terminal, each terminal including a terminal database and a terminal server which is programmed to accumulate the

balances of points for customers to which points are issued by the terminal's point program, a transaction center comprising:

     (a)   a center input;

     (b)   a center database; and

     (c)   a center server programmed to:

     (i)   enable the customer to apply via said center input information about the customer;

     (ii)   to enroll the customer in selected ones of the point programs of the plurality; and

     (iii)   create a record for each enrolled customer to be stored in the center database, the customer's record comprising a first file for the information inputted by the customer, and a second file for storing the balances of the points accumulated by the customer from corresponding ones of the selected loyalty programs.

11.   (withdrawn) A system for reconciling the cost of transferring points between at least two of a plurality of point programs, said reconciling system comprising:

     (a)   a transaction center;

     (b)   a plurality of terminals, each associated with a corresponding one of the plurality of point programs and comprising a terminal database and a terminal server programmed to:

     (i)   deposit points in its terminal database;

     (ii)   keep track and store in its terminal database a record of the deposited points;

     (iii)   periodically summing the deposited points; and

(iv)   transmit messages to said transaction center indicative of the number of deposited points in this terminal's loyalty program.

12.   (withdrawn) The reconciling system as claimed in claim 11, wherein said terminal server is programmed to calculate the value of the deposited points in terms of monetary units.

13.   (previously presented) A method of managing first and second points issuers, each of the first points issuer issuing first points and the second points issuer issuing second points at exchange rates set by the first and second points issuers respectively, the first points differing from the second points, said points exchanging method is implemented by a computer programmed to effect the following steps of:

(a)   entering first and second exchange rates by the first and second points issuers respectively;

(b)   entering a customer's request for buying first points and selling second points;

(c)   determining the presence or absence of each of the first and second exchange rates; and

(d)   blocking the selling and/or buying of points in the absence of either of the first or second exchange rates.

14.   (previously presented) A system for managing a loyalty points program at an exchange rate set by a proprietor of the points program, said system comprising:

(a)   at least one terminal associated with the points program and comprising a terminal input, a terminal database and a terminal server programmed at least in part to effect the following steps:

8

(i)   respond to a customer request to withdraw from and/or deposit points into said one terminal,

(ii)   a point program proprietor entering and storing in said terminal database of exchange rates for the points of the loyalty points program; and

(iii)   detect the absence of the exchange rates for the points program to transmit a blocking signal; and

(b)   a transaction center coupled by a data transmission path to said one terminal and comprising a center input and a center server programmed to effect the following steps:

(i)   respond to a customer request on said center input for transmitting via the data transmission path to said one terminal the customer request whereby points are withdrawn and/or deposited into the loyalty points program associated with said one terminal; and

(ii)   respond to the blocking signal to prevent the transmission of the customer request.

15.   (withdrawn) A method of enabling first and second point issuers that respectively issue first and second points to validate an exchange of the first points held by a customer for the second points, said point issuer validating method is implemented by a computer programmed to effect the following steps of:

(a)   facilitating the first and second point issuers to enter their first and second criteria respectively;

(b)   facilitating the entry of a customer's order to exchange its first points for the second points;

9

(c)   generating a first transaction to withdraw the first points from the first point issuer;

(d)   comparing the first transaction message with the first criteria;

(e)   if the first transaction message satisfies the first criteria, generate a second transaction message to deposit the second points in the second point issuer;

(f)   comparing the second transaction message with the second criteria; and

(g)   if the second transaction message satisfies the second criteria, validate the exchange of the first points for the second points.

16.   (withdrawn) A system to enable a plurality of potential customers to be validated for communication with selected ones of a plurality of loyalty programs, each having a criteria for validating the potential customer for communication therewith, said customer validation system comprising:

(a)   a plurality of terminals, each comprising a terminal data base and a terminal server; and

(b)   a transaction center including a center input, a center database and a center server, said transaction center being connected to each of said plurality of said terminals by a data transmission path, said center database storing the validating criteria for each of the plurality of loyalty programs, said center computer being programmed to:

(i)   facilitate the input of a request from a potential customer to communicate with at least a selected one of the plurality of loyalty programs;

(ii)   respond to the customer's request by constructing a customer's validation record in accordance with the criteria of the selected one loyalty program; and

10

(iii)   transmit the customer's validation record to said terminal associated with the selected one loyalty program;

(c)   each of said terminal servers being programmed to:

(i)   receive and to compare the customer's validation record with the criteria of its selected one loyalty program; and

(ii)   if there is a satisfactory match, validate this customer for communication with the selected one loyalty program.

17.   (withdrawn) The customer validation system as claimed in claim 16, wherein each of said terminal servers is programmed to add a confirmation code to the validation record if the customer is validated for communication with the selected one loyalty program and to transmit the satisfied validation record to said transaction center.

18.   (withdrawn) The customer validation system as claimed in claim 17, wherein each of said terminal servers is further programmed to:

(a)   accumulate and store in its database a current balance of the points issued and/or redeemed by the terminal's loyalty program, and

(b)   to insert the current point balance in the satisfied validation record being transmitted to said transaction center.

19.   (withdrawn) A system for validating a transaction including the withdrawal of first points from a first point program and the deposit of second points in a second loyalty program, said transaction validating system comprising:

(a)   at least first and second terminals associated respectively with the first and second point programs, each of said first and second terminals including a terminal input, a terminal database and a terminal server; and

11

(b)   a transaction center including a center input, a center database and a center server, said transaction center being connected to said first and second terminals respectively by first and second data transmission paths, said center database storing first and second criteria for validating transactions respectively with the first and second point programs, said center server being programmed to:

(i)   transmit via said first data transmission path to said first terminal a first withdrawal transaction message instructing the withdrawal of first points from the first point program;

(c)   said first terminal server being programmed to:

(i)   receive and compare the first withdrawal transaction message with the first criteria, and

(ii)   if the first withdrawal transaction message satisfies the first criteria, insert a first confirmed response code in and transmit a withdrawal confirmation record via said first data transmission path to said transaction center;

(d)   said center server being further programmed to:

(i)   respond to the receipt of the withdrawal confirmation record with the first confirmed response code to transmit a second deposit transaction message via said second data transmission path to said second terminal; and

(e)   said second terminal server being programmed to:

(i)   receive and compare the second deposit transaction message with the second criteria, and

12

(ii)   if the second withdrawal satisfies the second criteria, insert a second confirmed response code in and transmit a deposit withdrawal confirmation record via said second data transmission path to said transaction center.

20.   (withdrawn) In a system for reconciling the debits and credits created by an exchange of points from a first point program associated with a first terminal to a second point program associated with a second terminal, at least first and second data transmission paths connected respectively to the first and second terminals, a transaction center comprising:

(a)   a center database storing first and second accounts for the first and second point programs respectively, each of the first and second accounts including a first file for retaining at least a point withdrawal rate and a point deposit rate for the first and second points respectively;

(b)   a center server programmed to:

(i)   transmit via said first and second data transmission paths first and second transaction messages respectively to the first and second terminals to effect respectively a withdrawal of a first number of first points from the first point program and a deposit of a second number of second points in the second point program; and

(ii)   calculate a deposit to the first point program as the product of the first number of points and the point withdrawal rate of the first point program, and a credit to the second loyalty program as the product of the second number of points and the point depositing rate of the second point program.

21.   (previously presented) A method of managing a first points issuer and a second points issuer, wherein first points are issued by the first points issuer, and second points are

13

issued by the second points issuer and differ from the first points, said managing method is implemented at least in part by a computer programmed to effect the following steps of:

a) a customer setting a first number of the first points to be sold ;

b) the first points issuer setting its point withdrawal rate of the first points and the second point issuer setting its deposit rate of the second points to reflect respectively the monetary value of each of the first and second points in a common currency;

c) transmitting the common currency of determined monetary value to the second points issuer;

d) determining the monetary value of the common currency transmitted from the first points issuer to the second points issuer as a function of the point withdrawal rate of the first points and the set first number of first points to be sold; and

e) determining the number of second points to be deposited with the second points issuer as a function of the monetary value of the transmitted common currency and the deposit rate of the second points issuer.

22.   (previously presented) The method of managing as claimed in claim 21, wherein the first points issuer has a first database for storing an account of the customer's first points; and a second points issuer has a second database for storing an account of the customer's second points.

23.   (previously presented) The method of managing as claimed in claim 22, wherein said method further comprises the step of depositing the determined number of second points in to the second database.

24.   (previously presented) The method of using a monetary currency to redeem first points of a first loyalty point program and to purchase second points of a second loyalty

14

program, the first loyalty point program comprises a first issuer of the first loyalty points, the second loyalty program comprises a second issuer of the second loyalty points, at least one of the first loyalty points differing from the second loyalty points, the monetary currency using method is implemented at least in part by a computer programmed to effect the following steps of:

a) the first and second issuers respectively setting a first withdrawal rate for the first loyalty point program and a second deposit rate for the second loyalty point program;

b) a member of the first loyalty program setting a first number of the first points to be redeemed;

c) determining as a function of the first number of the first points and the first withdrawal rate, the monetary value of the first number of the first points as a determined amount of the monetary currency; and

d) determining a second number of the second points to be purchased as a function of the determined amount of monetary currency and the second deposit rate.

25.   (previously presented) The method of managing as claimed in claim 24, wherein each of the first and second loyalty programs has a plurality of corresponding members and comprises a database, each database with a plurality of corresponding files, each file for storing the loyalty points that were accumulated by the corresponding member of its loyalty program.

26.   (previously presented) The method of managing as claimed in claim 25. wherein step b) transmits currency to the file of the corresponding member of the second loyalty program.

27.   (previously presented) The method of managing as claimed in claim 26, wherein there is further included a step of providing an interface to implement step c) of determining the value of the number of the first points and step d) for determining the number of second points, the interface operating independently the first and second point issuers.

15

28. (currently amended) The method of using a common monetary currency to manage a plurality of loyalty point programs, each loyalty program comprises a loyalty points issuer, at least one of the plurality of loyalty points issuers issuing first points, at least another of the plurality of loyalty points issuer issuing second points that differ from the first points, the monetary currency using method is implemented at least in part by a computer programmed to effect the following steps of:

a) each of the plurality of points issuers setting a withdrawal rate and a deposit rate for its loyalty program;

b) a member of a related loyalty program setting a first number of the its loyalty points to be redeemed;

d) determining as a function of the set of number of loyalty points and the deposit rate of the related loyalty program, the monetary value of the set number of points as a determined amount of the monetary currency; and

e) determining a second number of points to be purchased as a function of the determined amount of monetary currency and the deposit rate of the related loyalty program.